

Arlington Master Plan Advisory Committee

Central School, Main Room - 7:00 PM

Minutes: April 10, 2014

Approved: May 15, 2014

Members present: Ann LeRoy, Harris Band, Carol Svenson, Greg Bowe, Sheri Baron, Bob Radochia, Joe Barr, Pam Heidell

Members absent: Eric Bourassa, Charles Kalauskas

Also present: Consultant Ted Brovitz of Howard, Stein, Hudson; Christine Scypinski (ARB); Joe Curro (BoS); Carol Kowalski, Laura Wiener, Ted Fields, and Joey Glushko of the Planning Dept. Sign-in sheets at the 700 PM public presentation indicated that about twelve residents were in attendance.

The meeting was called to order at 7:15 PM. Carol Kowalski introduced new Committee Co-Chair Carol Svenson.

Ted Brovitz gave the presentation highlighting the Transportation Working Paper, as well as addressing circulation in the Town. Following the presentation, there were questions and comments from those attending:

Christine Scypinski requested the consultants look at how subway station at Davis Square might impact east Arlington. Ted Brovitz indicated that he felt this could be done.

Harris Band expressed concern for neighborhood and quality of life issues in neighborhoods; he suggested that street use was catering to the “commuter” – and that policy and goals should be re-directed to pedestrian friendly street use.

Scott Smith suggested that non-car transit should be encouraged, as well as improving safe movement.

Scott Samenfeld raised the issue of safety for users on the sidewalks, which exhibit poor surface condition and wear.

Janice Weber suggested a walking path along the Bikeway shoulders to relieve the conflicts which occur for cyclist and pedestrian users. Additionally she expressed concern for pedestrian crossings at the Downing Square intersection.

Co-Chair Carol Svenson redirected everyone’s attention to the discussion questions which are a part of the presentation. Following are the questions and participant comments for each question:

- 1) How should the Town balance street capacity improvements with expanding multi-modal transportation options?
 - a. Some respondents commented on traffic issues and experiences they have had in the town. It reflected a lack of consistency in enforcement, and inconsistency in policies.

- b. There was inquiry about having a “dedicated bus lane,” which would allow buses priority.
- c. The question was raised about while encouraging additional business on Mass. Ave., what would be done about the need for parking, and dealing with additional traffic. An example of such concern mentioned student use of Mass. Ave. and side street parking in proximity to the high school, where spots are used most of the day, and nearby businesses suffer from having no parking available to customers/clients.
- d. It was suggested that expenditures should shift to encouraging/supporting pedestrian modality – improve conditions of sidewalks, and add sidewalks where none exist.

2) What could the Town do to extend and enhance “walkability” in Arlington Center, Arlington Heights and East Arlington?

- a. It was a repeated sentiment that the condition of sidewalks was very poor; investment in sidewalks would promote more walking.
- b. Winter time attention to sidewalks is needed – encouraging snowplowing of sidewalks, curbs and corners which allow safe movement for pedestrians; now, they often must walk in the roadway.
- c. Tree plantings without maintenance and pruning can diminish visibility and damage sidewalks; plant trees on private property.
- d. The current trend is for younger adults to “self-select” for NOT driving. Or at least, driving less; this should be kept in mind as we plan for the future.

3) Can the Town better manage and enhance parking supply and distribution in the village centers? How? What changes would the community support?

Comments included: improved management of parking with timed use and enforcement; encouragement and support of shared parking program; evaluation of the microclimate of parking lots.

4) Should the Town adopt standards for sustainable thoroughfares and parking areas? What kinds of standards would make sense in Arlington?

- a. Support management approaches;
- b. Encourage complete streets that serve all users, not just drivers;
- c. Recommend a “jitney” system, or small multi-use transportation vehicle;
- d. Develop a “neighborhood parking permit” program;
- e. Parking and transit must be integrated into policies related to land use;
- f. Continue support of the use of permeable pavement in parking area.

5) What can Arlington do to decrease congestion? Which of these ideas would you support?

- a) Encourage students to walk to school;

- b) Develop employment opportunities in Arlington so that more people can shorten their commute;
 - c) Encourage safer biking, and other alternatives to using private vehicles.
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- a. Find ways to separate bikers and pedestrians;
 - b. Develop innovations to get to and from Alewife Station; how will the new green line impact this traffic flow?
 - c. Expand/widen the Minuteman Bikeway to better accommodate walkers; add connections to the bikeway;
 - d. Bring a bike sharing program into Arlington; it should integrate with Hubway.

The presentation and accompanying questions/discussion ended at 9:05 PM. The members of the Master Plan Advisory Committee held a brief business meeting:

1. The minutes of March 6 were approved unanimously.
2. The minutes of April 3 were approved, as amended, with one member who was not at that meeting, abstaining.
3. Carol Kowalski reported on the appointment of new Committee member, Wendy Richter. Wendy has been a regular attendee at the MPAC forums/discussions.
4. Carol Svenson, Charlie Kalauskas and Carol Kowalski will be working on the MPAC presentation to Town Meeting, which is scheduled for May 7.

There will be an additional meeting of the MPAC on Thursday, April 17 at 7 PM in the Planning Dept. offices. Topics proposed for this meeting include working paper recommendations coming out of the working group discussions of the presentations and submitted comments; creating an updated “draft” working schedule for the remainder of spring and summer; finding schedule time for Visual Preference Survey and Zoning Diagnostics – Analysis and Recommendations. Planning Dept. staff will be in touch with consultant Judi Barrett to discuss the schedule, on Monday, April 14.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 PM.
Minutes submitted by Joey Glushko